

Brief news

Vision 21 news

Transition Town Network Meeting, Cheltenham – 27th January

Vision 21 Transition Network is holding a series of talks and discussions on the Transition Town movement as a creative, community-led response to the economic and environmental problems that face us. Come and join us to be part of this exciting initiative in Cheltenham. Learn about the issues and how we can build local resilience and co-operative communities to prepare for the changes ahead.

Our next meeting will be of particular interest to local businesses, asking why they should be concerned, and looking at what is already happening in Cheltenham, what could happen, and what sort of businesses will flourish in the future. The meeting will take place on **Wednesday 27 January, 7.30pm at the University of Gloucestershire – Francis Close Hall Campus – room TC002a**

This and subsequent events will be an opportunity to share information, ideas and skills. Our first meeting in November looked at growing food locally. For more information [click here](#).

Vision 21 Transition Network is part funded by Cheltenham Borough Council as part of their Community Pride Initiative.

Cheltenham Community Recycling Champions

The next Community Champions meeting will take place on Monday 25th January at Hesters Way Community Centre between 6.30pm - 7.45pm. The group meet once every six weeks to discuss current issues, new members are always welcome. For more information call 01242 224321 or email mharrison@vision21.org.uk. This is a Vision 21 Project, funded by Cheltenham Borough Council. For more details [click here](#).

Reclaim/Repaint

Reclaim continues to redistribute good quality household items, including furniture and electrical items, to people on low incomes in the Cheltenham area. For more details [click here](#). **Repaint**, based at Reclaim, presently has a good stock of paints and wood seals, including some speciality paints. For more details telephone 01242 228823 or [click here](#).

Become a member

Would you like to support Vision 21's work to raise awareness of climate change and reduce emissions in Gloucestershire. If so you could become a member. [Click here](#) to download our membership form.

Local news

Cheltenham Borough Council's draft Corporate Strategy

Cheltenham residents are being asked to give their views on Cheltenham Borough Council's new corporate strategy, which will run from April 2010 to March 2015.

The draft strategy, sets out what the council hopes to achieve over the next five years. It includes the council's proposed objectives for enhancing and protecting the environment. The plan will be reviewed each year with an annual budget and action plan giving greater detail.

The draft strategy and feedback form are available on the council's website, [click here](#), until 26th January 2010. The corporate strategy will go to full council in February 2010 for approval.

Invitation to attend the Gloucestershire Sustainable Energy Forum

Gloucestershire Sustainable Energy Forum's first meeting will take place on Monday 1st February. This is expected to be held at Gloucester City Council's offices in The Docks, but the venue will be confirmed shortly.

As always, the group is keen to see participation from all sectors, including as many of the councils as possible, local sustainable energy businesses and community groups. Please forward this invitation on to any of your contacts who may be interested. The GSEF is an open forum for discussion of all matters pertaining to the growth of sustainable energy in our area. This new decade is one during which we have some extraordinarily challenging energy targets to meet – both local and national – and we all know how far behind we are already. For more details contact Alastair Stevens, Severn Wye Energy Agency Ltd, Tel: 01452 835067, email Alastair@swea.co.uk.

Target 2050: Countdown to a low carbon home

Severn Wye Energy Agency is looking for thirty households in Gloucestershire/South Gloucestershire/Wiltshire to take part in a project called Target 2050: Countdown to a low carbon home. Participating local authority areas are Cheltenham Borough Council, Cotswold District Council, Gloucester City Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Stroud District Council and Wiltshire Council.

For more details of what it involves and what is being offered call the Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre free on 0800 512 012 or e-mail enquiries@est-southwest.org.uk as soon as possible for more information and an application form. All applicants will be notified, successful or otherwise, by February 2010.

Get involved - Barnwood goes Green

A number of groups in Barnwood are planning to hold a green community day event on World Environment Day (June 5th 2010). The groups including the Barnwood Community Partnership, local churches and local environmental groups will hold the event in Barnwood Park and St Lawrence Church, Barnwood between 11am and 3pm. These groups have held a community event for a number of years but decided because of the growing need to raise awareness of climate change that the 2010 theme would focus on green concerns.

If any local environmental groups wish to be involved please telephone Phil McLellan on 01452 616305 or via email philmclellan@yahoo.co.uk

Warm and Well

The Warm and Well scheme works together with the local authorities, the NHS and the insulation company, Domestic & General, to provide information on home insulation, energy efficiency and how to claim a grant towards the cost of insulation.

Grants are available throughout Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire. The great thing is that grants are available to all homeowners or private tenants. If you are in receipt of a qualifying benefit you may be entitled to free insulation. Grants are subject to availability and on a first come first served basis.

Call the Energy Savings Trust Advice Centre now and ask about the Warm and Well scheme on 0800 512012.

Gloucester City Recycling - You wanted to recycle more from home - now you can

Gloucester City residents are due to get a new recycling scheme from February 2010 enabling them to recycle more from home.

From 1st February, Gloucester City Council will be enabling residents to add items such as card, household domestic batteries and plastic bottles into their recycling boxes. As there will be more items in residents recycling boxes these will be collected weekly. The new service will also see the arrival of a new bin for weekly food waste collection. Enabling residents to recycle any food preparation waste or cooked food waste, diverting it from landfill.

To make sure residents are happy with the new collections the council's food waste team have been running a number of road shows throughout October and November at key sites in the city. Further events will be held in January on: 12th & 13th in Eastgate Mall, 14th at The Gateway Shop in Matson, 19th & 20th in Sainsbury's

Quays and 21st in Longlevens Co-op. The road shows are a chance for residents to speak directly with the waste team, giving their views on what they want and learning about the new changes.

A leaflet will soon be delivered to each household giving more details of the new service. There will also be an extensive marketing campaign and information available on www.gloucester.gov.uk in the New Year.

Stroud News

For various items of news from Stroud you can go to <http://ruscombegreen.blogspot.com>. Items of news on the blogspot also currently include recycling electrical goods, campaigns against the incinerator, the County's waste core strategy, Thermal Imaging homes, Freecycle and Freagle, Stroud's celebration of 350 day in October and more.

Read blog of Stroud's Issy Cockcroft who was part of the Youth delegation at the Copenhagen summit: <http://livingonsunshine.blogspot.com/>

National News

Two C or Not Two C? Little Mermaid; Little Progress in Copenhagen (reports and papers on Copenhagen from Vision 21)

The Co₂untdown to Co₂penhagen - Ban Ki-moon, the secretary general of the UN said that "the future of humanity depends upon these talks". Jim Hansen, NASA chief scientist, urged that Copenhagen must fail because political compromise would make any agreement worse for the climate than getting the right one. He is also fundamentally opposed to carbon trading, which is at the heart of climate treaties, which he compares to Papal indulgences that the Catholic church sold to sinners for redemption in the Middle Ages.

Global warming is all about degrees of temperature. For a number of years it was accepted that a 2C rise in global temperatures above pre-industrial levels would give an 'acceptable' chance of averting runaway climate change. We are already at 0.7C. Last year Jim Hansen said that this should be revised to 1C. At Copenhagen, the presidents of Bolivia and Venezuela called upon the world to minimize global warming to 1C, forecasting that above this, "many islands will disappear and Africa will suffer a holocaust." The Alliance of Small Island States (43 countries) protest at Copenhagen that any deal that allows temperatures to rise by more than 1.5C is 'not negotiable'. Their call was backed by a further 48 countries. The following day, the UN conference chief Yvo de Boer implied that this proposal had little chance of being adopted. Archbishop Desmond Tutu said: "We are facing impending disaster on a monstrous scale ... a global goal of about 2C is to condemn Africa to incineration and no modern development... it is better to have no deal than to have a bad deal".

A confidential UN analysis obtained by the Guardian stated: 'the emissions cuts offered so far at the Copenhagen summit would still lead to global temperatures rising by an average of 3C'. The newspaper article adds: According to the Stern Review: 'A rise of 3C would mean up to 170 million more people suffering severe coastal floods and 550 million more at risk of hunger, as well as leaving up to 50% of species facing extinction' And 3C implies runaway climate change.

What did the summit achieve? Given the heartfelt hyperbole, from the great and the good, heart-breaking little: A political agreement was brokered by China, South Africa, India, Brazil and the US, much to the surprise of the G77 (130 countries) who had not seen the text, but learnt about it by watching Obama on a TV screen informing the world about the deal - The Copenhagen Accord - a political statement not a legally binding treaty. The agreement said that 'the increase in global temperature should be below two degrees', but dropped the initial 80% reduction target by 2050 and failed to set any long term reduction targets. No date was set for global emissions peaking when this should be 2015 or earlier. Rainforests and crop mono-cultures such as oil palm plantations for biofuels became part of the carbon markets which is not good news for biodiversity, human rights, Southern civil society or climate change.

So where do we go from here? The talks are clearly undemocratic and billions of people in the majority world are not represented. We all need to make sure our MPs and governments are accountable to us so that they do the right thing on our behalf. As well as taking this national action, the prevarication of our leaders since the 1992 Earth Summit brings even more clarity to the legend: Think Global, Act Local. It really is down to us. Join a green NGO (there are local Friends of the Earth groups in Cheltenham, Forest of Dean, Cirencester, Tewkesbury and a fledgling group in Stroud. Get active with the Transition Town (TT) movement. There are TTs in Stroud, Newent, Minchinhampton, Gloucester, Bishops Cleeve and Vision 21 are acting as a catalyst to

get a group started in Cheltenham (see above for details). Dare we say join Vision 21? Vision 21 have joined the 100 Months initiative and 10:10 campaign. Log on below to get your friends, family and workplaces to sign up. As a New Year's resolution sign up to green electricity and calculate your carbon, ecological and water footprints – and then reduce them.

To read a fuller report [click here](#) and to read the Copenhagen Accord [click here](#).

And finally a touching film, which should perhaps give us all hope and impetus to act:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z25Vj6Gm93Q&feature=player_embedded

<http://www.1010global.org/>

<http://www.onehundredmonths.org/>

<http://www.vision21.org.uk/?page=carbongym>

<http://footprint.www.org.uk/>

<http://www.waterfootprint.org>

<http://www.vision21.org.uk/index.asp?page=goodenergy>

<http://www.vision21.org.uk/index.asp?page=ecotricity>

Siberian Britain

As Britain is gripped in it's longest cold spell for decades and there is talk of empty shelves and food price increases as farmers struggle in the frozen conditions here is an article from George Monbiot and Leo Hickman which shows how quickly people would like to believe that cold weather means that the globe isn't 'warming' . There is also a link to the metrological explanation for this cold snap:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/blog/2010/jan/06/cold-snap-climate-sceptics>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/jan/04/science-behind-the-cold-weather>

Biodiversity

Biodiversity gives rise to ecosystem health which is vital for life on earth. Ecosystems provide us with everything we need and consume: oxygen, decomposing waste, removing pollutants, help manage drought and flood, protect soil from erosion, ensure soil fertility are the carbon sinks that absorb carbon dioxide. 2010 been declared the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) by the United Nations: <http://www.biodiversityislife.net/>

Please see the fantastic exhibition of wildlife photographs at Nature in Art at Twigworth: <http://www.nature-in-art.org.uk/tempex.html>

Wildlife Garden

Spare a thought for the UK's birdlife who are suffering with food shortages, as well as shoppers in this freezing weather. For feeding tips, please see: <http://www.rspb.org.uk/>

100 Months – month 83

2010, now officially the most important year for our climate, ever. And all because world leaders did not seal the right climate deal in Copenhagen. At the end of this year, they will try again, in Mexico. So where are we now?

Well, existing greenhouse gas reduction pledges will not halt emissions growth until 2040, 35 years after the 2015 target called for by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. By 2020 global emissions from all sources would be some 55 billion tonnes, up from around 46 billion tonnes today. [Click here](#) for more details on 100 months. [Click here](#) for their monthly blog.